Numb. 27.

Heraclitus Ridens:

AT

A Dialogue between Jeſt and Earneſt, concerning the Times.

Tueſday, June the 28th. 1681.

Jeſt. OH Sir! You are a Penſioner, Sir, you receive Contribution-money, Mr. *Momus* has found it out.

Earn. Nay then we ſhall ne're be poor again, I warrant you; but pray Sir, where does *Momus* ſay we ſhall find it?

Jeſt. E'en where *Diego* was to find his Legacies, where you can your ſelf, I trow.

Earn. Now I perceive *Momus* is about winding up his Bottoms: I have been a Tory, a Tantivy, Prieſts and Jeſuits, world without end.

Jeſt. Nay and a Club too, and I think that has two ends, whereof *Momus* has felt the ſoft one now and then; but it is a thick-ſkull'd Rogue, and ſwears he is not affraid of his Brains.

Earn. He knows he is out of danger, it would be a great kindneſs to him to prove he has any. Well, it is a comfort that he is drawing towards a Concluſion, I ſuppoſe he has nothing left to beſtow upon me after Penſioner, unleſs it be Mr. Devil, whom they repreſent to be Coſin-German to a Penſioner.

Jeſt. No, No, he has done your buſineſs effectually, You muſt never think to ſtand for Knight, Citizen or Burgeſs while you live.

Earn. Well, if that be the worſt on't, the matter is not great, I am of the honeſt Tranſlators mind, who comforted himſelf at the Kings Reſtauration, *That he ſhould be a Cobler ſtill; and that his Laſt and his Aules were out of the danger of ſequeſtration and the arbitrary Government of a Commonwealth.*

Jeſt. Ay, that ſame *Commonwealth* is a very pretty thing, they ſay ſome People are as fond on't as a Cat's of new Milk.

Earn. One would think they ſhould have had enough of it the laſt bout.

Jeſt. Why, do you think people can ever have enough of Liberty?

Earn. I proteſt I have ſometimes been ſeized with the moſt profound Admiration imaginable when I have conſidered, how eagerly unconſidering People like Fiſhes bite at the guilded and Artificial Fly of *Liberty*, when if they catch it, they are catched themſelves with the Hook of ſlavery.

Jeſt. Now are you falling into one of your Fits of being confoundedly ſerious; I confeſs I was affraid of it when you named a *Commonwealth.*

Earn. I aſſure you *Slavery* is no jeſting matter; and for my part I think *Liberty* is ſo glorious a thing, that it will become all People ſeriouſly to conſider of it, and not, like *Æſop*'s fooliſh Cur, loſe the ſubſtance with ſnapping at the ſhadow; and I aſſure you, there is a great difference many times between the name and the thing.

Jeſt. Well, this Curioſity is a damnable Tyrant; now cannot I for my life forbear enquiring a little into this matter, though I know there will not be one word of mirth in it.

Earn. That's your miſtake, I hope you'l allow the poſſibility of the Proverb of being *merry and wiſe.*

Jeſt. Come then, as wiſe as you can, and as merry as you pleaſe; pray let me underſtand ſince both the Monarchical men and the *Commonwealth men* are for *Liberty*, how come they to fall out?

Earn. That I will, and I think I ſhall be able in a few words to ſpoil the Market of a *Commonwealth* in *England*, or as the *Baptiſts* call it a *Free State.*

Jeſt. Come on your ways, let's hear how.

Earn. You muſt know then that there are two great things in the World, the one is *Power*, the other is *Money:* now where theſe two fall into one hand, there the Liberty of the People is in danger.

Jeſt. I know 'tis Money makes the Mare go; this Money is a peſtilent thing, but proceed.

Earn. Well Sir! Such now is the happy conſtitution of the Government of this Nation under Monarchy, that though the Supream Power and Sovereignty be both by the Laws of God and the Land veſted and declared to be in the Prince; yet ſuch hath been the goodneſs and condeſcenſion of our former Kings, that no extraordinary ſupplies of Money can be levied upon the People without their own free and voluntary conſent in Parliament; and of this his Majeſty has been a moſt Religious Obſerver; and this is a moſt impregnable Baſtion againſt the Poſſibility of Arbitrary Power.

Jeſt. Very well.

Earn. But now for your *Commonwealth* or *Free State*, as they call it, be it Ariſtocratical, or be it Democratical; that is, by Lords and Commons, or by Commons who lay aſide Lords as Uſeleſs and dangerous; both the Power and the Purſe are put into one hand: and when Sovereignty and the raiſing of Money are ſo united, who ſhall hinder them if they pleaſe from governing Arbitrarily, who ſhall oppoſe their laying what taxations they in their Supream Wiſdom

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ſhall think fit upon our Eſtates, who ſhall dare to deny the payment of them; who ſhall, or can ſay he has any more Liberty or Property than they pleaſe, let all the *Platos*, the *Voxes*, the Face-makers, and *Commonwealth Dons* anſwer this if they can.

Jeſt. Nay, I confeſs, if the People will truſt a *Commonwealth* with both Money and Sovereignty, they do at the ſame time reſign their Laws and Liberties; for Money and Power are next to Omnipotent.

Earn. Let 'em look into the other ſide of the Ditch; is it not a plain caſe; does not the Sovereign Power there, lay what impoſitions they pleaſe? I dare be bold to affirm, there is never a ſpot of ground and water in the World has purchas'd Liberty at ſo vaſt a Rate; and the truth on't is, they who live under a *Commonwealth* can never know when they have paid their purchaſe.

Jeſt. This is Copyhold Law: I find then all people who are Tenants to a Free-ſtate, are at the will of the Lords, and not Fine certain neither; but Sir, you have forgot the greateſt of all Liberties, and what can never be bought too dear, *Liberty of Conſcience.*

Earn. That is certainly the greateſt Cheat in the World; for no Sect can give Liberty, or allow it to others whom they think in a ſtate of Damnation, without being guilty of their Damnation by allowing that Liberty. And therefore when the *Presbyter* was in the Chair he thought *Toleration* was unlawful, the *Independent*, *Anabaptiſt*, &c. would if they were in power both think and practiſe the ſame; and it is irrational to believe that a man can have an opinion that he is in the right way to Heaven, and all others in the high Road to the Devil, and yet be perſuaded in his Conſcience that they ought to have Liberty to go to the Devil, as he believes they will, if they are not of his true Church.

Jeſt. But how come they to wheedle the People into this good opinion of them then?

Earn. Oh Sir, they have a world of little Arts, but the principal are Flattery and pretending to pray by the Spirit.

Jeſt. Then I find the *Pie Fraudes* are allowed among Diſſenters as well as Jeſuits.

Earn. No doubt of it; for I pray what more dangerous Flattery than to aſſure their Followers *that they are the only People of God*, and what greater Impoſture than their pretences to pray by the Spirit?

Jeſt. As how?

Earn. Why, their Prayers or rather *Extempore Harangues* and *Effuſions* are either Humane Inventions, or Divine Inſpirations; now let them chuſe which of theſe they pleaſe, they cheat themſelves and the People who believe them.

Jeſt. Pray let me underſtand this; for I meet with abundance of People who worry and Tory me about theſe Non-Cons.

Earn. Why, look you Sir, if their admired Prayers are meer Humane Inventions, then they can be no better in their own nature than the Common Prayers, which they reject upon that ſcore; but they are much the worſe, becauſe the other are approved and commanded by the Wiſdom of the Nation, which theirs never were nor ever can be, they themſelves not knowing or pretending not to know, what they ſhall pray at the next meeting. If they ſhall ſay they are of Divine Inſpiration, which is the Cheat they put upon the poor people, then I ſay they are Canonical Scripture and infallible; and if they ſhall ſay ſo, I ſay further, they deſerve to have their blaſphemous Tongues bored through for their aſſertion.

Jeſt. Nay, the truth is, I cannot ſee how they will get out of this Nooſe: but come e'n let 'em go, it will not be long before the World will come to be ſenſible of the danger theſe pretenders to Religion have brought upon the Peace and happineſs of the Nation. Come let's have an Extempore *Quere* or two to conclude with the time.

Earn. Quere 1. Whether they who have made it their buſineſs to keep a pother and a ſtir about the buſineſs of *Fitz-harris*'s Trial had not better have let it alone, conſidering the Proverb, The more they ſtir, the more they will——?

2. Whether the Pannel of *Fitz-harris*'s Jury which was not to be procured by the *Attorney General*, was not to be ſeen two or three days before at the *Amſterdam Coffee-houſe?*

3. Whether *Dick Implement* of *Queens-head-Alley* be not a very pretty Fellow, to endeavour at every turn to Ridicule the Loyal Expreſſions of ſuch as have Addreſſed their Thanks to his Majeſty, and made their Proteſtations (as all good Subjects are bound) to Defend his Perſon and the Government as now *by Law Eſtabliſhed*; and whether he and his managers who oppoſe and affront ſuch as do, can be thought other than Enemies to the King and Government?

4. Whether *Dicks* Brains or his Loyalty weigh moſt, and whether the Fools feather in his Cap be not heavier than both?

5. Whether he and his Comrade *Vile* may not in good time come to obtain Chevalierſhips upon a Wooden-Horſe, and ride in Triumph through the City like others their Predeceſſors the Knights of the Hempen Garter?

6. Whether if Juries undertake to be Judges of matter of Law as well as of Fact, there will be any more need of Judges: and whether this be not a fair ſtep towards the ſubverſion of the fundamental Laws and Government, for Jury-men who are only to go according to Evidence and matter of Fact, to enter into the interpretation and ſenſe of the Laws?

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